

An Impact of Height

by sixxon

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Summary: Nishinoya Yuu is studying in the library when he meets Akiyama Naru, a first year in Tsukishima Kei's class with close ties to Yamaguchi Tadashi. This is a story about how close Nishinoya gets to Akiyama and the things he learns about her. Will his involvement with her affect the team? Rated T for language and future themes (violence).

1. Chapter 1

Nishinoya Yuu, Karasuno's 'Guardian Deity' was a fantastic volleyball player, an excellent libero, and a terrible student. After his suspension let up, he was behind on school work and was (forced to be) in the library to study every day that he didn't have club activities; one of those days just so happened to be today.

As he was sifting through the books looking for history textbooks, he found one that he wanted, but it was on the top shelf. Nishinoya jumped feverously to try and reach the book. At the height of his sixth attempt, someone snatched the book away.

Nishinoya whipped around to face the book-thief, but swallowed his tongue when he saw an extremely pretty and tall girl holding his book. She had to be at least as tall as Tsukishima, if not taller, with long auburn hair that was pulled back, Band-Aids on her face, and large baby blue glasses. The girl looked down and shifted awkwardly.

"Your book, senpai!" She nearly shouts, earning her an earnest shush from nearby.

The girl quickly slaps a hand over her mouth. "I'm sorry." She bows slightly. "Ah! I need that later though!" She sighs, eyeing the book that was now in Nishinoya's hands. "I'm Akiyama Naru from class one-four, please bring it to tomorrow!" "me tomorrow when you're here, Ah! Done, I meant done!" She squeaks, quickly running out of the

isle.

Nishinoya watches her scurry off, long pony-tail swinging behind her. He looks down at the book in his hands and a warm feeling bubbles up in his chest.

She called me senpai! He exclaims to himself. _And she was cute too!_ He jumps, pumping his fist in the air. He knew he was going to tell Tanaka about this later.

* * *

><p>The next day at morning practice, Nishinoya was practically jumping out of himself to tell Tanaka about yesterday.<p>

"Oi, Ryuu, Ryuu~" Nishinoya beckoned his friend.

Tanaka's attention perks up and he bounds over to Nishinoya, earning them the subtle attention of Tsukishima.

"What's up Noya-san?" Tanaka asks.

"I met this really cute girl in the library yesterday and she called me senpai! She was really tall and wants me to bring the book she got down for me to her later!" He enthuses wildly, flailing his arms in excitement.

"OOOOOH!" Tanaka exclaims in excitement. "What did she look like? What class is she in? Did she really call you senpai? Are you gonna introduce me?"

"She had this _super_ long hair that was a redy-brown colour and these massive baby blue glasses and some Band-Aids on her face, and she's in class one-four! Yeah, she really called me senpai and why would I _not_ introduce you?!" Nishinoya speeds through Tanaka's questions.

It's then when Tsukishima, after listening to their conversation while he practiced returns, started laughing at them. Nishinoya and Tanaka swung their head around, looking at Tsukishima with angered expressions.

Tsukishima holds his hands up and slows his laughter to a snicker before stopping. "That's Akiyama, she's in my class."

Nishinoya's eyes gleam in admiration. "Uuwa, really, what's she like? Is she taller than you?" Tanaka nods in tandem with his friend, equally hopeful to hear his answer.

"She's clumsy and freakishly tall, once she stood up to bow and her legs toppled the desk over." He snickers.

"Waa, clumsy girls are so cute!" Tanaka enthuses.

"Yeah sure, if you like idiots who don't understand the proportions of their body." Tsukishima shrugs, walking back to continue his practice.

Nishinoya and Tanaka look at each other and shrug, both of the boys running off to resume practice after being called out by Daichi.

* * *

><p>Later that day during break, Nishinoya was waiting outside class one-four preparing himself to knock. Just when he was about to, Tsukishima came up from behind him and slid the door open.<p>

"Akiyama, you have a visitor." He states, giving Nishinoya a devilish grin.

The short boy glares back at him as Tsukishima walks gallantly into his classroom. Looking past Tsukishima, he saw Akiyama pass him, noting that she was indeed taller than Tsukishima. Just as she was about to reach the door, she tripped and fell flat on her face. A few people looked her way, but paid her no mind, as if it were a common occurrence.

Nishinoya instantly bends down and offers his hand to her. Akiyama looks up at him, nose and forehead reddened from her face-to-ground meeting a few moments ago.

"Eya! Thank you, senpai." She says genuinely, taking his hand.

Her hand was warm and surprisingly not much bigger than his own hand. Nishinoya helped her up to her feet, once again being taken off guard by her height.

After a moment of staring at her, he remembers that he brought the book for her. "Oh, I brought you the history book you wanted." He says, offering it to her with both hands out.

Akiyama giggles and takes it. "Thank you, uhm, what's your name, senpai?"

"Nishinoya Yuu." He declares proudly.

"Ah, Nishitanoya-senpai." She says to herself. "Ah no, Nishinoya not Nishitanoya." Akiyama pulls a restrained face, as if she's punishing herself for saying his name wrong.

"It's fine Naru-san." He assures her.

Akiyama clasps her hands against her chest. "N-naru, you, ahâ€|" She stutters nervously, blushing furiously. "Well, thank you for the brookâ€" I mean book."

Akiyama bows quickly and Nishinoya blushes lightly, scratching the back of his head. "Heh, it's no big deal." He mutters.

Akiyama smiles brightly down at him.

"Naru!" Someone calls, its Yamaguchi.

"Coming, Tadashi!" She yells back. "Bye-bye, Nishinoya-senpai."

Nishinoya smiles as he watches her turn back into the room, nearly tripping over a desk as she heads over to Yamaguchi. Nishinoya wonders briefly how they know each other, and how they became so

close. He would have to ask his kouhai about it later during practice.

When Nishinoya turns away to head back to class, he comes face to face with Tanaka, who's giving him a sly grin. Tanaka wraps an arm around Nishinoya's neck and gives him a quick noogie.

"Was that her?! You little brat, you said you'd introduce me." He laughs before releasing his friend and releasing a sigh. "Manâ€ and she's cute too, though I didn't get a very good look."

"You know it! Did you hear her calling me senpai?" He says, prideful as ever.

"Hell yeah! You think she would call me senpai too?"

Nishinoya nods enthusiastically. "Apparently she and Tadashi are close," He puts his hand to the side of his mouth and whispers to Tanaka. "They use each other's given names and no honorifics."

Tanaka grins evilly and pumps his fists at his sides. "Wanna tease him for information later?"

"Do I?!" He exclaims in response, mocking Tanaka's knees-bent-legs-apart stance.

"Do you?!"

"Hell yeah!" Nishinoya jumps. This action earns him a few wayward glances from other students, but he ignores it.

****Authors Comments:****

****This is my first **_**Haikyuu!**_** Fan-fiction and my first ever fan-fiction based from an anime/manga. I really wanted to write something using an OC and I hope this turns out well. Obviously this won't be a one-shot but I hope that I can continue it for a long time because I have some plans for the story. As for the whole OC thing, I'm not a super big fan of OC's in fan-fiction because every time I've read it, it seems like the OC is kinda shoe-horned into the story awkwardly. I'm going to try my best to, Y'know, **_**not**_** do that, by doing lots of research on character backgrounds and relationships. ****

******* **_AN EXPLANATION BELOW_** ***** ****

****I do have an explanation for when Akiyama Naru (OC) calls Nishinoya, **_**Nishitanoya.**_** Shita is the second half of **_**antei shita (**_**â@%â@šã-ã•Ÿ****)**** which means **_**steady**_** in Japanese. She calls him this on purpose but doesn't mean for him to hear it (even though he does). She's basically saying he's a steady/reliable person (because he helped her up when she fell), which is why he says it's fine (that and because she's a cute girl).****

2. Chapter 2

After evening practice inside the change room was when Nishinoya and

Tanaka decided to corner Yamaguchi and ask him about Akiyama.

"Yamaguchi~" Tanaka taunts.

Yamaguchi jumps slightly at the face both of the boys are making.

Nishinoya pokes him in the arm repeatedly. "I noticed you're close with a certain girl in your class, Yamaguchi. _Naru-san~" _He teases the freckled boy.

Hinata perks up upon hearing this and practically shoots over to the other side of the change room to join their conversation. "UWA! Yamaguchi, is she you're girlfriend?!" He beams.

Yamaguchi looks over at Tsukishima, who only glances back indifferently. "S-she's not, I-I swear you guys!"

"Aw, c'mon, don't lie to your senpai." Tanaka jests.

Nishinoya nods. "Yeah, we got your back."

"Guys, don't tease him so much." Sugawara laughs awkwardly, trying to help Yamaguchi out a little.

"Ah, but I wanna know!" Hinata wines. "Hey, hey, Yamaguchi, is she really your girlfriend? Is she in our year? Oh, oh, what class is she in?"

Yamaguchi laughs nervously and blushes, putting his hand to the back of his head. "Uh, well that'sâ€¦ she's not my girlfriend or anythingâ€¦"

"Oi, Hinata." Kageyama calls to the spiker. "Stop being an idiot and hurry up, or I'll beat you to the school entrance." He threatens.

"Hey! That's not fair; you would get a head start!" Hinata shouts. "Also I'm not an idiot, stupid Kageyama." He pouts.

Kageyama flashes a frightening face at the red head, whose back straightens in fear. "You can't complain if you're goofing around, dumbass."

"Oi, I'm not a dumbass! I'll beat you there, I'll win!" Hinata declares, grabbing his bag and dashing out of the room.

"Hey, that's foul play you bastard!" Kageyama shouts, chasing after him.

"Idiot'sâ€¦" Tsukishima mutters.

Tanaka and Nishinoya snicker and divert their attention back to Yamaguchi, looking up at him with hopeful eyes.

He raises his hands. "Honestly, we're just childhood friends. We didn't even go to middle school together."

"Yamaguchi, I'm leaving." Tsukishima tells him.

"A-ah! Tsukki, wait!" He reaches out. "Ah, I'm leaving then, bye." He says with a quick bow, dashing out after Tsukishima.

Nishinoya and Tanaka look at each other.

"Do you think he likes her?" Nishinoya asks.

Tanaka shrugs. "I don't know, but we must do everything in our power to help him if he does!"

Nishinoya nods earnestly in agreement.

"Just don't push it with him you guys." Daichi warns the two. "Anyway, Suga and I are going, lock up would you?" He says, tossing Tanaka the key.

Nishinoya jumps and grabs the key out of Tanaka's path, pumping his fist in victory and laughing. "You got it!"

* * *

><p>The next day at break, both Nishinoya and Tanaka show up at class one-four, calling for Akiyama. When she gets to the door, she has tunnel vision for Nishinoya.<p>

"Ah, hi, Nishinoya-senpai." She smiles.

After greeting him, she looks at Tanaka, who's standing beside him, and jumps back. "You're, uh, the guy from before, uh, I didn't know you were my senpai, I'm sorry for, uh, runmpâ€" running awayâ€"|" She says awkwardly.

"Oi, Ryuu, what did you do?" Nishinoya whispers.

"She was lost and I tried to give her directions but she started crying and ran away!" He whispers back.

"Uhm, Naru-san, this is Tanaka Ryuunosuke." Nishinoya introduces him.

"I'm sorry for running away before, Tanaka-senpai! You just looked really scary!"

Nishinoya looks back to Tanaka, who looks shocked, having not known that was the reason she ran away, and for being called _Tanaka-senpai_.

"I'm not scary I promise." He says, flapping his hand.

Akiyama flutters her free hand about before diving it into the plastic bag she was holding. "Then, uh, Tanaka-senpai, have this as an apology from meâ€"| please." She says shyly, holding out a package of melon-bread for him. "I-if you don't like it, I have othgeâ€" other things tooâ€"|"

Tanaka takes the bread slowly from Akiyama, once her hands are away from the bread, Tanaka whoops in celebration. "Thank you Akiyama-san! It's my favorite!"

"Hey," Nishinoya pokes him. "You're gonna share that with me right?" He whispers.

"Not a chance!" Tanaka laughs.

"U-uhm, senpai's, I was wondering, but, uhm, what is it that you need?" Akiyama asks.

Tanaka and Nishinoya both swing their heads back up to face her, and then look at each other before Tanaka nods.

"We have some questions about Yamaguchi." Nishinoya says.

"Ah, but why are you asking me, isn't he on the volleyball team with you?"

"We were actually wondering if you two were dating." Tanaka whispers. "Since you are so close, but he only said that you were childhood friends. So if you aren't dating, who does he like?"

Both boys look up at her to see that all the blood in her body has rushed to her face. "Uh, w-we're not uhm, dating or anythingâ€¦ and I don't know who he lickâ€¦ likesâ€¦ We are chi-childhood friends though." Akiyama stumbles. "Ah as for me, I don't think I like him like _that_â€¦ not that I don't like people, or anythâ€¦ anyone, for that matter."

The boys eye her suspiciously. Before they can say anything, Tsukishima nudges his way by Akiyama, grunting at her for being in the way.

"Ahn, sorry Tsukishimaâ€¦" She says, blushing furiously, yet he ignores her and leaves the room.

"Oi! Tsukishima!" Tanaka calls, chasing down the hall after the blocker.

"Uhmâ€¦ Nishinoya-senpai," Akiyama says nervously, he looks up at her. "Would it be okay for me to get your e-mail, or your phone number?"

Nishinoya's eyes widen and he nods enthusiastically. He pulls out his phone and tells her to do the same and they exchange contact information. Nishinoya smiles happily down at his phone.

Uwa, I actually got a girls number. He sighs.

"Thank you." She smiles. Nishinoya thinks that she looks very pretty when she smiles, like the moon on a clear night. "Do you have practice today?" She asks.

"Ah, yeah, we do." He says, sounding a little disappointed, thinking she was going to ask him out after school.

"You, would you mind if I came to watch?" She asks.

Nishinoya smiles up at her and gives her a thumbs-up. "Of course you can, Naru-san!"

3. Chapter 3

About fifteen minutes into practice, everyone is interrupted by Akiyama bursting into the gym doors, panting, then tripping over the entrance way and landing flat on her face, arms extended out in front of her. The team stops their practice to observe their guest, but Suga is the one to run over and help the girl up.

Akiyama hisses and rubs her forehead. "Ah that hurtâ€¦ thank you senpai."

"Naru?!" Yamaguchi exclaims. "Why are you here? And why are you in your gym clothes?"

Akiyama releases her forehead and smiles broadly at her friend. "Nishinoya-senpai said I could come and watch. As for my clothesâ€¦ the fountain broke while I was using it and my uniform got all wet."

Kageyama, frustrated with having practice interrupted, stalks over and glares at her. "You're interrupting our practice."

"I'm sorry Kageyama-san." She says genuinely.

Hinata, eager to get in on all the commotion, runs over to this new face and begins jumping. "UWAAA!" He cheers. "You're so tall! Hey, hey, how tall are you?"

Akiyama twiddles her thumbs shyly. "One-ninety-nine centimetres." (_A/N: About 6'5'')_.

"WOW!" Hinata gushes. "So awesome! Do you play any sports?"

Kageyama whacks Hinata over the head. "Shut up idiot."

"Oi! I'm not an idiotâ€¦ and that hurt! Stupid Kageyama, you're just jealous because she's taller than you." Hinata mutters.

Kageyama starts taunting Hinata, daring him to repeat himself, when suddenly Akiyama laughs. The boys crowded around her stop observing the duo's regular behavior to look at Akiyama, who's holding her gut in laughter.

Akiyama wipes the tears from her eyes. "I came to watch, but this is better than I expected. I'd even like to try playing with you all, it seems like fun." She smiles softly.

"Okay, but have you ever played volleyball before?" Daichi asks.

Akiyama nods earnestly. "I was on the team in middle school."

"Cool! Where did you go to school?" Hinata asks.

"I went to Chidoriyama." She says. "The girls' team didn't have enough members to play in official matches though, so I spent more time in the acrobatics clubâ€¦"

"If you're gonna play, practice serving then." Kageyama tells her before stalking off, dragging Hinata behind him by the collar of his

shirt.

"Ah, uh, I'll help you Naru." Yamaguchi offers, handing her a ball.

"Thanks, Tadashi." She smiles, ruffling his hair. "But I got this." She declares with determination. "Could you get in position to receive?" She asks.

"Yeah sure." Yamaguchi says, running off to the other side of the gym.

Just as Akiyama sets up to serve, Nishinoya and Tanaka enter the gym and take in the sight before them.

"Hey, is she really gonna serve?" Tanaka asks Daichi.

"It seems that way. Apparently she was on her middle school volleyball team." He says.

"Oh, Nishinoya, apparently she went to your middle school." Suga interjects.

Nishinoya looks at him with interest. "Really?" Suga nods.

Nishinoya stops looking at his teammates to observe Akiyama. He watches her throw up the ball for a jump serve, and when she makes contact with the ball, it shoots right to Yamaguchi, just like Oikawa's incredible serve from their practice match with Aobajousai. The ball hits Yamaguchi's upper arm and deflects to the side of the gym.

There's a moment of silence in the gym before a fiery yell rips across the room. "Tadashi!" Akiyama yells. "Did you see that?! It was just like old times, I guess you still can't beat me!" She declares wildly. "C'mon Tadashi, give me a serve, make it super far, I'll return it with everything I got."

Yamaguchi jumps back and chuckles nervously from her yelling before getting the ball. Yamaguchi serves the ball a few feet away from her and she dives for it. After she hits it she shifts her weight on her hands, doing a back handspring to stand up. When it pops up, it flies over by the net and she runs for it with full force for a spike. When she jumps, half her torso is over the top of the net. The ball hits her hand with a loud smack and then slams itself into the ground.

"C'mon Tadashi, bring it, bring it, bring it!" She shouts.

Meanwhile, Daichi, Suga, Tanaka, and Nishinoya all stand on the sidelines with shocked expressions on their faces.

"Ah you!" She yells, pointing to Hinata. "Do you spike? I know Kageyama-san is a setter, but do you spike?"

"Yes!" He cheers, raising his hand up. "I'm a spiker, I spike!"

"Goog, good." She says. "Tsukishima-san!" She calls. "Come block his

spike with me!"

"No way, why do I have to do it?" He says, pushing up his glasses.

"Because you're the next tallest one here and I want Kageyama-san to set for him." She says wildly, pointing to Hinata.

"Lame." Tsukishima mutters.

Akiyama pulls a terrifying face, one scarier than that which Kageyama and Tanaka can make. "Kei." She says sweetly. "If you don't block with me, you aren't allowed to copy my homework anymore."

Tsukishima seems to get the message and follows her over the other side of the net lamely. The two set up to block while Kageyama and Hinata set up for their quick. When Hinata dodges the blockers, Akiyama tries to block his spike, but fails to get there in time. Hinata whoops, jumping up in victory.

"WOW! You can really jump, just as I thought!" She shouts, ducking under the net to meet with him.

Akiyama leans down and pulls Hinata into a bone crushing hug, lifting him off the ground before dropping him and running over to praise Kageyama.

"And your setting is awesome Kageyama! It was all like, _woosh_ and _FWOOM_!" Akiyama cheers.

"Akiyama, stop acting so weird." Tsukishima tells her.

Akiyama's face falls suddenly as she fixes her hunched posture, twiddling her fingers once more and biting her lip. "Sorry, Tsukishima-san." She says quietly.

"OI! Tsukishima why'd you do that?!" Nishinoya yells.

"Yeah! You're not supposed to be mean to girls." Tanaka chimes in.

Tsukishima shrugs. "Whatever." He says before walking over to join Yamaguchi.

"Don't mind him, Naru-san. He's just a big jerk." Hinata tells her.

"Ah it's fine," She sighs. "I need to be going any ways." She says with a sad smile. "Tadashi, bye bye!" She calls before jogging up to Nishinoya and Tanaka. "Nishita!" Nishinoya-senpai, Tanaka-senpai, bye bye."

With those words, Akiyama leave the gym, running back home.

4. Chapter 4

That night, Nishinoya was lying on his bed, playing with his phone, wondering if he should message Akiyama about what had happened with Tsukishima at practice. Just as he was about to put the phone down,

and clumsy before graduating, unless he had and she just looked totally different now.

With that line of thought, Nishinoya hopped off his bed and began to rummage through his closet for his middle school yearbooks from second and third year. He opened second year first, flipping through the first year students, unable to find her. He put the book down, picking up the next one and looking through the second years, and that's when he found her.

She didn't look like how she did now at all. She had a sour look, many piercings, half a shaved head, bright red hair, and a face like a delinquent. The only thing that was the same were the baby blue glasses she wore. After lingering over the photo for another moment, Nishinoya flipped to the page with club photos. Low and behold, she was there.

The first club photo was the girls' volleyball team, which were only her and three other people who all looked a little frightened of being next to Akiyama. Unlike the rest of the clubs, this one had no action shots. The second photo she was in was the acrobatics club. The other girls, six of them besides Akiyama, all had smiling faces in contrast to the scowl on his kouhai's. Akiyama only had one action shot: she was on the bars. The way the photo was taken, it looked like she was doing a one-handed hand-stand on the bar in a sparkly black and red bodysuit.

As far as Nishinoya knew, Karasuno didn't have an acrobatics club, but they did have a girls' volleyball team. He wondered why she didn't join it. Looking back down at her photo again, he realized he did remember her. She was the girl that his classmates talked about, the one who was intimidating as hell and had rumors swarming around her like moths to a flame. She wasn't as tall as she was now, but she could still tower over Nishinoya.

He'd never met her formally, or even knew her name for that matter, the only thing he knew her by was her nickname: _Icy Devil._

* * *

><p>The next morning at practice, Nishinoya decided, to get to know Akiyama better, he would ask Yamaguchi about her.<p>

"Yamaguchi!" He calls out.

"Oh, Nishinoya, what is it? Am I serving badly?" The boy frets.

Nishinoya shakes his head. "I want to know why Naru-san doesn't play volleyball anymore." He declares.

"Oh." Yamaguchi says, surprized. "I don't know the details about it because she never told meâ€| but I do know that something happened in her third year." He pauses. "Tsukki might know more about it than me though."

Nishinoya makes a disgruntled face, slouching forwards like an ape. "Like he's gonna tell me."

Yamaguchi laughs awkwardly before running off to continue practicing.

Sighing deeply, Nishinoya makes his way over to Tsukishima, who's taking a break by sitting against the wall.

"What is it?" He asks, looking up at Nishinoya.

"Hey, why doesn't Akiyama play volleyball anymore if she's good and she likes it so much?"

Tsukishima makes a pained expression and pushes up his glasses. "Probably because of what happened in the only official game she's ever played. Not that I think it matters as much as it did then, she probably thinks she shouldn't be playing." He shrugs.

"Why, what happened?"

The middle blocker sighs deeply. "She was too aggressive with her serves."

"AH! You mean like that one yesterday?! That was so cool!" Nishinoya enthuses.

"No, she's better at serving than that." He pauses. "Can you go away now?"

Nishinoya steps back and fakes being hurt. "So cold, Tsukishima."

Behind him, Tanaka snickers. "You got scolded."

Nishinoya whips around to face him. "Did not!"

"Oi! Get back to practice, you lot!" Daichi shouts, startling the two boys into scurrying back onto the court.

* * *

><p>At lunch that day, Hinata goes (with Kageyama in tow) to visit Akiyama. When she appears at the door in front of him she laughs nervously.<p>

"Ah Kageyama-san andâ€¦ I'm sorry I don't know your name." She says, sounding ashamed of herself.

"I'm Hinata, Hinata Shouyou!" He declares proudly, puffing out his chest.

When Kageyama hits Hinata over the head for being too boisterous, Akiyama laughs and invites them in to eat lunch with her.

"Hey," Hinata says suddenly. "How come you knew stupid Kageyama's name and not mine?"

"Shut up, dumbass Hinata." Kageyama growls.

Akiyama blushes deeply. "Well, in middle school I always watched Kageyama-san's games. I had a bit of a crush on him for his setting." She admits.

Kageyama's face steams as he stutters to come up with a reply, but Hinata cuts him off. "Ah, Kageyama? Seriously, but he's so

lame!"

"Hey! Don't go saying unnecessary things, you bastard."

"Well, I don't think he's lame. What happened in that last game was too bad, those other guys were really mean!" She pouts. "You just wanted to win but they were just jerks, it made me so, so, so mad." Akiyama sighs, as if remembering the day fondly. "Theyâ€| had to get people to calm me down afterwardsâ€| Oh! But I'm glad it made you so much stronger, Kageyama-san, and I'm glad you met such a great spiker like Hinata."

"UWA! She called me great Kageyama!" Hinata enthuses, gripping the setters sleeve and tugging on it. "Naru-san, it sounds like you really enjoy volleyball, why don't you join the girls' team?!"

Akiyama's face falls. "Iâ€| don't have a right to play anymore." She says quietly.

Just on cue, the bell rings, forcing the odd-ball duo back to their respective classes. Akiyama watches after them, smiling slightly when Kageyama whacks Hinata over the head, yelling at him about watching his words.

5. Chapter 5

"Naru!" Yamaguchi calls out to his friend, running up by her side. "Are you coming to watch us practice again?" He asks.

Akiyama smiles and shakes her head. "Mm-mm, I don't think I will."

"Is it because of what Tsukki said?"

Akiyama pauses for a minute in thought before shrugging. "No, but he was right, I was in the wayâ€| Oh, where is Tsukishima-san anyways? You two are near inseparable."

"He said he was going to talk to the teacher about something and told me to go ahead to practice." Yamaguchi explains.

Akiyama gives a silent 'oh' before nodding. "My cousin is coming over today."

"Which one?"

"The one who taught me to serve, Tooru, why else would I loiter around the school?" She chuckles.

Yamaguchi laughs too. "Well, you should know that we beat him once in a practice match, so you can laugh at him." Akiyama smiles at that. "I'm going on ahead, have fun!" He calls, running off to the gym.

When Yamaguchi enters the gymnasium, he finds that aside from Hinata and Kageyama, practice hasn't started yet. Daichi and Suga were having a conversation with Asahi, Ennoshita was pulling out a second ball bin, Tanaka was fawning over their manager, and Nishinoya hadn't

arrived yet.

When Tanaka spots his kouhai at the gym entrance, he abandons his conquest of Shimizu and bounds over to him.

"Did you see Noya-san on your way here?"

"â€|No?"

Tanaka heaves a large sigh. "That little brat, he said he had cleaning duty so I told 'im to hurry but he's as slow as ever!"

Right as Yamaguchi was about to reply, someone did a face-plant at full force into his back, knocking him to the ground. Yamaguchi groaned, turning his head to see none other than the teams' wild spirited libero lying on top of him. Tsukishima, who was watching this moment from behind them, snickered and covered his mouth, pulling out his phone to snap a photo while trying not to laugh too hard. Tanaka however, was much less reserved, and burst out into tears, falling to the floor with laughter.

Tanaka's actions earned the attention of Hinata, who was twitching to find out what happened, fluttering around the group. Kageyama started yelling at Hinata for not paying attention to him while he was explained something about receives. Asahi was farther away from the group, wanting to intervene, but not knowing whether he should or not.

"Is everyone here?" Daichi called, earning the attention of everyone instantly.

"OSU!" The group shouts.

"Yamaguchi is that girl coming today?" The captain asks.

He shakes his head. "Naru said she was busy."

"No way, I wanted to receive her serve!" Nishinoya shouts.

Daichi smirks. "I wanted all of us to receive her serve. It's similar to the one Oikawa used on us in the practice match we had with Aobajosai." He turns back to Yamaguchi. "If not her, then do you know who taught it to her?"

"Oikawa did."

Yamaguchi's words earn the attention of both Kageyama and Nishinoya. "How?!" They both shout in stereo.

Tsukishima drops his gym bag by the door. "They're cousins." He sighs.

"Are they really cousins?" Suga asks. "That's a little frightening."

"Yeah, that's why she's not coming today, he's going to visit. He may have taught her his serve, but she's better at it _and_ she hates him." Yamaguchi explains.

Tanaka laughs. "No way! A girl who _doesn't_ like Oikawa Tooru? I never thought I'd see the day." He hollers, encouraging Nishinoya to laugh with him.

Daichi looked at the two and when they caught his eye they shut up immediately. "Anyway," Daichi coughs. "Yamaguchi, do you think you can get her to come back, you two are friends right?"

Yamaguchi shoots an awkward glance at Tsukishima before shaking his head. "I don't think I can."

Daichi nods. "What about you, Nishinoya, you know her right?"

Said boy gives a determined nod. "Osu! I'll give it a try."

"Don't waste your effort, she's doesn't play volleyball anymore." Tsukishima tries to dissuade him.

"Yeah, come to think of it she said something like: _I don't have a right to play anymore,_ at lunch." Hinata chimes in, attempting to impersonate Akiyama. "Doesn't that sound ridiculous? She even said she used to have a crush on Kageyama, _Kageyama _of all people!" He shouts.

"Oi, dumbass, what's that supposed to mean?" Kageyama says, glaring down angrily at Hinata, who looked like he was preparing to be hit.

Nishinoya and Tanaka burst into laughter. "I get what you mean, Shouyou!" Nishinoya says through tears.

"C'mon guys, I'm sure Kageyama could get a date if he really wanted too." Suga intervenes.

Unfortunately, his words only cause Tanaka to laugh harder and throw himself on the floor, making Kageyama scowl even deeper. The young setter might have even been shaking as well.

"If it didn't take time away from volleyball then I would date." Kageyama mutters.

Daichi coughs to attain every ones attention, making a face that anyone looking would wonder if they were telepathic. They all got the message: _Stop fucking around and start to practice already!_

With that, everyone scattered, taking out balls and practicing serves, receives, and what-have-you.

* * *

><p>Meanwhile, at the Akiyama household, Oikawa was pestering his beloved cousin to the end of her wits.

"Naru-chan." He whines. "You don't talk like you used to, even Nishida said you were different." Oikawa lowers his voice. "You don't even mail me threats anymore."

Akiyama squints not wanting to dignify him a response, even though she does. "My _little brother_ is less childish than you. I thought you'd be happy about not getting my mails anymore."

Oikawa laughs. "But you're my favorite Tobio-chan-loving little cousin; I can't resist your mails."

Akiyama shoots him a deadly gaze. "I don't like Kageyama-san. I just admired him, that's all."

"Have you started playing again?"

"I'm never going to play volleyball again, and you know why."

Oikawa sighs. "I didn't teach you my serve for you to give up."

"I didn't ask for that!" Akiyama shouts, slamming her fist onto the counter.

Her cousin puts his hands up in defence. "But you did." He deadpans. "It's not my fault you used it how you did."

"What are you still doing here?" Akiyama spits. "I'm trying to change, and you're fucking it up for me. Leave."

"Ah, I see scary Naru is back, I'll leave then, if that's what you want." Oikawa says, standing up from the table and putting his tea-cup in the sink. "I'll be back to check on you another day, Naru-chan~"

When the door closes behind him, Akiyama waits for a few moments before grabbing her cousins' cup from the sink and smashing it on the floor.

"Don't ever come back!" She screams, tears threatening to spill over onto her face.

* * *

><p>Authors notes:

*****Just some notes about the relationships in the story:
**

So basically Akiyama is Oikawa's cousin, Nishida is Akiyama's little brother, who Oikawa teaches volleyball to at the Lil Tykes Volleyball Classroom, (which is fully canon, aside from Akiyama being Nishida's sister/ Oikawa's cousin and Nishida being the kids name). I literally spent an hour looking for some info on that kid only to conclude Oikawa's cousin didn't **_have**_** a name in the first placeâ€¦| **

Anyway's I hope you all enjoy my story so far! I hope I can keep updating at this pace, but I have a job and school is starting up soon so I might be busier. I never do my homework though (in favor of writing and drawing and stuff) and my courses are ones that don't require any homework because it's all in-class work (that's probably a hyperbole because I'm going into grade 12 but IDC).

6. Chapter 6

"Naru-san, Naru-san!" Nishinoya calls to his kouhai running up to her

from down the hall.

Akiyama makes a cruel face when she whips her head around to face him. When he stops dead in his tracks, she realizes what she's doing she smiles gently and Nishinoya sighs in relief.

"Nishinoya-senpai, do needâ€" do you need something?" She corrects herself.

"Are you gonna come to practice today?" He asks hopefully.

"Yeâ€" She starts and then shuts her mouth quickly. "Yeah, I don't think I willâ€"|"

Nishinoya's shoulders drop and he pouts up at the tall first year. "Please, Naru-san? Last time you said you'd watch but you left just as I got back to practice!" He whines.

Akiyama pauses and bites her lip. Surely watching wasn't too bad. Tentatively, she nods, slowly and unsure. "I-ifâ€" I was just watchingâ€" then maybeâ€"|" She trails off.

That's good enough for Nishinoya, so he grabs her hand and shoots off to the gym, dragging her behind him and laughing excitedly.

Nishinoya bursts into the gym, hand firmly gripped around Akiyama's, stopping her from tripping again. "I caught her!" He shouts victoriously.

Immediately, Hinata yells, "Tsukishima, you owe me five-hundred yen!"

"Did you think I would seriously bet money on something so stupid?" Tsukishima asks, rolling his eyes.

Hinata pouts, telling the blocker that he's 'no fun' and was being 'totally unfair'. Tsukishima just shrugs it off, returning to his own practice.

The short middle blocker runs up to Akiyama with sparkles in his eyes. "Are you really the Grand King's cousin?"

"Huh?"

"You know, the Grand King, Oikawa Tooru!" He shouts and Tanaka elbows him in the side.

"Oi, didn't Yamaguchi say she hated him?" He reminds him.

Akiyama sighs, putting her bag down by the door and shaking off Nishinoya's hand. Nishinoya blushed when he realized he'd forgotten to let go.

"He is my cousin." She states lamely before looking down at Tanaka. "And, yes, I do hate him."

"Uhm." Suga interjects. "Besides that, Akiyama-san, are you practicing with us today?"

Akiyama blushes a little and scratches her cheek awkwardly. "uhâ€¦ oh, uhm, no, senpai." She says quietly. "I'm just watching today since I didn't get to see everyone play last time."

Okay, so that wasn't entirely true. She wanted to play with them, but she just couldn't. She was mad enough at herself for even picking up the ball last time (not to mention spending yesterday with Oikawa had put her on edge, more so than usual). Even if she was only caught up in all the excitement of meeting Kageyama for the first time and wanted to impress him.

"Are you sure?" Daichi asks. "There's more than enough space for you."

Akiyama waves her hands. "No, no it's fine, senpai." She smiles.

Tanaka jumps in front of her. "Since she wants to see everyone play, why don't we have a practice match?" He says eagerly. "Would that be okay, Akiyama-san?" He smiles at her.

Akiyama nods earnestly. "I'd love to see you play, Tanaka-sanpai, but that's up to the captain."

Tanaka smiles broadly at being called senpai, which was obviously his goal from the beginning, not just a practice match.

"Whadda'ya say, Daichi?" Suga says, slapping the captain on the back. "It'd be fun."

Daichi is silent for a few moments, and then nods. "Sure," He turns to face the other members. "Who wants to play a practice game? We'll only do one set." He calls out.

Kageyama and Hinata are instant to agree. Yamaguchi tells Tsukishima that "_It'll be fun_" and drags him into the game as well. Tanaka, Nishinoya, Asahi, and Suga all agree. With one short for a five on five game, Daichi calls out to Ennoshita, who agrees reluctantly.

When the teams form, the first years and Tanaka are on one team, and the rest are on the other. The game begins with Ennoshita's serve. Yamaguchi calls out for the receive and the ball pops up. Hinata runs around to dodge the blockers and calls out to Kageyama, who tosses the ball to him at seemingly supersonic speed. Unfortunately, it doesn't score a point because Nishinoya receives it perfectly, popping the ball up for Suga to set. Asahi calls for the ball, spiking it through Hinata and Tsukishima's block and earning a point.

Akiyama is enthralled by the game before her. She had known Hinata could jump high, but seeing it from the sidelines was something different all together. The way Hinata had (literally) blind faith in Kageyama and his toss, how well Tsukishima could block, Nishinoya's nimble receives, Asahi's power, they were all things that captivated her. She didn't care who won, she was happy enough just being able to witness people with such amazing skills. Karasuno had an incredible team.

When the set ends, the score is 25-19 for Daichi's team. Akiyama

claps and smiles for them.

"Do you want to try playing, Akiyama-san?" Asahi asks her innocently, holding out the ball to her.

Her fingers twitch, wanting to swipe the ball away from her senpai, but she tries to resist. Some of the other players are watching her behaviour, hoping for her to pick up the ball. Just as Akiyama's hand reaches out to touch the ball, Tsukishima takes it out of the ace's hands.

Akiyama closes her outstretched hand into a fist and grits her teeth. "Thank you, Tsukishima-san." She sighs, looks over at him and nods, mouthing a second thank you, more sincere this time.

Tsukishima stares at her before looking over to Kageyama. "Oi, King," He calls. "Oikawa taught you to serve, right?" Kageyama nods and Tsukishima tosses the ball to him. "Akiyama, watch him serve from up close." He says, walking over to sit against the wall, Yamaguchi follows him.

Akiyama nods awkwardly, understanding what Tsukishima wants, and quickly walks over to Kageyama, hands behind her back. "Go ahead and serve please." She says quietly.

Kageyama nods and prepares for his serve, tossing the ball up and jumping up to smack it down on the other side of the net.

Akiyama hums and walks closer to Kageyama, circling him once before stopping again. "The serveâ€¦" She begins. "Your footing is late, the angle you hit the ball at is off, I can tell that wasn't where you meant to send the ball, you should bend your knees a little lower, and your jump is a bit early." She says quickly, all in one breath.

Kageyama's jaw drops and he begins stuttering out the beginning of excuses. Meanwhile Hinata is trying to suppress his amusement in that Kageyama is being told that he did something wrong in _volleyball_.

In a moment of bravery, Akiyama turns to Ennoshita, who's by the ball bin. "Give me a ballâ€¦ please." Ennoshita nods, picking up a ball and throwing it to her. "Nishinoya-sanpai," She says and he looks right at her, waiting for instruction. "Please set up a water-bottle on the floor, it can be anywhere in the gym, I don't mind where."

The libero does just that. He sets up a bottle in the corner of the court on the other side of the net, in bounds. "Is that good?" He asks.

Akiyama nods. "Kageyama-san, please watch closely, pay attention to the positions of my body as serve, especially when I swing."

When Akiyama serves, it's surprisingly fast. The ball hits her hand with a loud smack and the ball knocks the water-bottle across the gym, hitting it with enough force to dent it and cause the water inside to spill out.

The gym is silent for a while, until Hinata, Tanaka, and Nishinoya

all yell in excitement. "Awesome!" They yell in stereo.

Akiyama turns to Kageyama, making a face that would put Daichi's most fearsome anger to shame. Kageyama jumps when she speaks. "Do you understand?"

Kageyama nods and puffs out his chest. "O-OSU!"

"Oh how the king has fallen." Tsukishima laughs.

Yamaguchi nods. "Well, given how she's always been, she's always had lots of names, like Ice Demon and what not," He begins. "But the most common one was '_The Courts Devil_'." He explains to the rest of the team.

Akiyama walks over and picks up ball she just served with before taking it over to Tsukishima, same unconscious expression she had from when she was teaching Kageyama. Akiyama shoves the ball into Tsukishima's hands harshly.

"I get it, Kei." She says. "You hate who I'm trying to be." Akiyama leans down to Tsukishima's ear and whispers loud enough for anyone nearby to hear it in full clarity. "Simply, Kei, it's not your fucking business." She spits, shoving past him and out of the gym.

Everyone that was in earshot, (those being Nishinoya, Yamaguchi, and Suga) looked at Tsukishima fearfully.

Just as Yamaguchi opens his mouth, Tsukishima cuts him off. "Told you." He says. "She shouldn't be playing."

"Why not!?" Nishinoya and Hinata yell.

"Yeah, Tsukki, she knows not to get mean outside of the court."

"Do you really want to know?" Tsukishima asks, pushing his glasses up.

The team nods.

"Okay, if you insist."

7. Chapter 7

That night, Nishinoya was lying in bed, replaying the events from practice in his head. The way Akiyama looked and the words she used. It was so contradictory to how she was when he first met her in the library. The Akiyama he'd met was kind and timid, but that wasn't who she really was even if he knew it was who she wanted to be. Nishinoya recalled the texts he had sent her, happy and kind with many ridiculous emoticons. Surely that side of Akiyama was real, even if suppressed by her past and who she was.

After Tsukishima had told the team what happened, no one really knew what to say. Yamaguchi had asked him why he didn't tell him, since he was sick that day, but Tsukishima had just shrugged it off, stating that Akiyama didn't want him to know.

Suddenly Nishinoya's phone went off, ringing loudly in the middle of the night. He picked up quickly, not checking the caller I.D in favor of not waking anyone in the house.

"Hello?" He says lowly.

A few shuffles come through the line. "Ahñ| I didn't think you would really pick up, Nishinoya-senpaiñ|" Akiyama's voice comes through, clear as a bell.

"Well, why did you call then?"

"I'm very sorry for what happened earlier!" She shouts. "I lost myself, I'm sorry!"

Nishinoya's eyes widen, he'd expected her to be mad the next time he spoke to her, he sits up immediately. "I-it's fine, Naru-san, you'll wake up your family if you yell like that!"

When Akiyama hesitates, Nishinoya can hear air passing through the line and the sounds of crickets in the background. "No I won't." She chuckles nervously.

"Naru-san, where are you?"

"J-just outsideñ| nowhere really special or anything like that." She stutters.

"Naru-san," Nishinoya says harshly. "Where are you?"

"The park by the schoolñ|"

"STAY THERE!" Nishinoya all but shouts into the phone.

"Nishiñ|" He cuts the line on her.

Nishinoya pedaled his bike with every ounce of energy he could muster. The park was nowhere to be at one thirty in the morning. Akiyama should have been at home, quietly whispering into the phone, not sitting in a park feeling sorry for herself. That wasn't right; no one should have to deal with that alone. Nishinoya had hated it when Asahi adamantly refused to go back to the volleyball club, and he didn't want to see anyone else go through what Asahi had, _all over again_.

When the park came into view, he pedaled faster, jumping off it without breaking.

"Naru-san?!" He calls, "Come out here!"

The libero searches around for her, stopping when he hears a thud come over from one of the tubes.

"Owñ|" A moan comes out.

Nishinoya ducks into the tube, finding Akiyama there, clutching her head in pain. He puts his hand out on her shoulder and she jumps, almost hitting her head again. She turns slowly to face Nishinoya. Her eyes are puffy and swollen with black make-up smearing around her eyes. She sniffles once, twice, and then starts crying again, putting

her hands on Nishinoya's shoulders.

"Y-you're the last p-person I wanted to see me cry." She mutters.

Nishinoya sighs and pulls her into his arms. "Then what did you call me for, you Idiot."

Akiyama laughs, pulling her arms around Nishinoya and holding him tightly as if he were a stuffed toy. "Tadashi didn't pick upâ€¦ and K-keiâ€¦ I can't call Kei. There was no one else to call." She cries.

Nishinoya pats her back gently. "It's okay, Naru-san. Now, why are you out here?" He asks gently.

Akiyama shakes her head in the crook of Nishinoya's neck and breathes out heavily. "Because, it's my birthday." She mutters. Her words are barely audible, but with her mouth right next to Nishinoya's ear, he heard it in full clarity.

"Yourâ€¦ birthday?" He whispers.

Akiyama nods. "Because it's my birthday, I can't go homeâ€¦"

"It's okay," He says again, patting her back. "You can tell me what happened."

The tall girl nods and takes in a shaky breath. "M-my dad, he died on my birthdayâ€¦" She pauses for Nishinoya to say something, but he doesn't so she continues. "I was almost homeâ€¦ I went out with some friends, mo-mom was the only one home with dad. Someone bro-br-broke into the house and she hid and called the cops." Akiyama clutches the back of Nishinoya's shirt.

"When I saw the cop cars I was just down the street. If I'd been home soonerâ€¦ If I had run a little fasterâ€¦ thenâ€¦" She pauses and grips the fabric of the libero's shirt tighter. "Then my little brother would have a dad!" She screams. It's not the kind of scream she made when she served to Yamaguchi that day in the gymnasium, full of light and enthusiasm. It's the kind of scream you never want to hear come out of someone's mouth, a scream of regret and guilt, one that shakes around the edges and blazes bright red alarms in your mind.

After hearing a scream like that, Nishinoya knows what she's saying: _It's my fault he's dead. I hate myself for that. It should have been me, why couldn't it have been me?_ These things had nothing to do with what Tsukishima had told the team at afternoon practice, which is why he had originally thought she was crying alone in the park. What could he do for her? It wasn't the same as when Asahi had thought the team's loss against Dateko was his fault. Except it was, there was no way she could have known what was going to happen, it was unavoidable.

Nishinoya pulls Akiyama back to look her in the eyes. He had just noticed her glasses were gone, and he could see her strange dark and light brown bi-coloured eyes stare back at him, reddened and full of tears. He couldn't handle her the same way he did with Asahi, forcefully and loudly like a thunderstorm. Nishinoya put his forehead

against Akiyama's, staring into her eyes with all the intensity his voice couldn't use.

"Naru," He whispers. "It wasn't your fault. There was nothing you could have done, no way to know what was happening. Like a, likeâ€¦" Nishinoya pauses, looking for his words. "Like a thunderstorm." He says.

"A thunderstorm." She repeats, mystified.

"Yeah."

Akiyama chuckles, making Nishinoya jump and wonder if she'd lost her mind. When she looks up at Nishinoya's expression she smiles gently. "That's just like you; you're an unexpected storm front, or a sun shower, Yuu."

Nishinoya smiles and scratches the back of his head in embarrassment. "Mhm, now let's get you home, Naru."

Akiyama blushes heavily. "Ahn, well, my skirt is stuck on a screw." She admits. When Nishinoya looks at her questioningly, she clarifys. "I'm too baâ€¦" big to reach it."

Nishinoya's face burns with understanding. "Well, first that, then we get you home."

* * *

><p>Authors Notes:

WOW, I'm such a dick. I gave you that really cool cliff hanger and my follow up didn't even include Tsukishima's story. Trust me, I'll give you the story when the time is right, this time I just gave you another part of Akiyama's back story.

To clarify about that backstory: Basically it was Akiyama's birthday (she was in her last year of elementary school) so she went out with her friends for her first ever "friend-inclusive" birthday party. But while she was out a robber broke into her house, and her mom hid in a closet and called the police (she was pregnant with Nishida [lil bro Akiyama] at the time). Her dad was in his office and went out to confront the robber, but when the robber saw the police lights he killed her dad (b/c he had seen the robbers face) and took off with some valuables. The robber/ murderer has not been found.

Akiyama heard the gunshot that killed her father.

8. Chapter 8

The next day, Akiyama didn't come to school. Nishinoya panicked, wondering if she had run away from home again, but when he received a message from her that she had caught a cold, he sighed in relief.

"What's up with that, Noya-san?" Tanaka, who had been sitting with his friend at lunch, asked.

Nishinoya meets Tanaka's eyes and smiles broadly. "I was worried that Naru-san was skipping because of yesterdays practice, but she just caught a cold."

"OOOH!" Tanaka exclaims, standing up and smacking the desk. "You got her number?!" He smirks and puts a hand to his chin, smirking. "Noya-san, what will Kiyoko say if you start going out with an underclassman?"

Nishinoya spits out the juice in his mouth. "Ryu!" He nearly shouts. "You know that Kiyoko will always be our goddess!" He cheers, standing up.

"Nishinoya?" A classmate calls.

"Ah yes?" He answers, turning away from Tanaka.

The boy looks over at the door and back to Nishinoya. "You have visitors." He says before going back to his seat.

Nishinoya goes to see his visitors with Tanaka in tow, and is surprised to see Yamaguchi and Tsukishima standing there.

"Ah, Nishinoya, I had something I wanted to ask you." Yamaguchi says.

Tsukishima eyes Yamaguchi. "Why am I here then? If all you wanted to do was ask somethingâ€¦" He mutters.

"Tsukki, please," Yamaguchi begs, clasping his hands together. "It's for Naru's sake."

Tsukishima scoffs, but Nishinoya's ears perk up at the mention of his kouhai. "What about her?" He asks.

"Ah, Akiyama-san, isn't she sick today?" Tanaka buts in.

Yamaguchi nods. "Naru said that she got help from you about yesterday, Nishinoya-san." He says. "If it's alright, I was wondering what she might have meant by that."

Nishinoya recalls what happened in the park and tries to refrain from letting the blood run to his cheeks. His attempt fails when Tanaka yells: "Noya-san, you dog!" and punches the libero on the shoulder in a friendly gesture.

Tsukishima looks down at his senpai. "Was it about yesterdays practice?" He asks with something in his eyes that Nishinoya can't quite place.

Yamaguchi hums. "Don't mind that, Tsukki, she said it was about something else when _I_ asked her." The freckled boy sighs and hunches his shoulders. "It was her birthday, so I was worried something had happened."

Tanaka's eyes bug out. "It was her birthday?! Tsukishima, you bastard, what're you doing, picking on girls during their birthday? Birthdays are s'posed to be special!" He shouts, but there's not much malice behind it.

Tsukishima clicks his tongue. "It's fine she doesn't even like her birthday."

"What? Why not!?" Tanaka yells.

Does he know what happened? Nishinoya thinks to himself, but he's silenced from brooding on it when Tsukishima speaks again.

"I don't know." He says, making a pained expression, probably annoyed by Tanaka.

"I did give her some advice, if that's what you mean." Nishinoya tells Yamaguchi, ignoring the way Tanaka and Tsukishima were looking at each other. "If she was upset, then I guess it calmed her down."

It wasn't really a lie, Nishinoya knew that much, but it wasn't really the whole truth either. He figured that if Akiyama didn't want to tell Yamaguchi about last night, then she didn't want to tell anyone. All he had done was throw a few _I guess's_ and _If's_ in between words.

Yamaguchi nods, accepting his response while Tsukishima pushes his glasses up. "Yamaguchi, can we leave now?" He asks.

Yamaguchi smiles up at his friend brightly and nods in approval. The team walk down the hall back to class, Yamaguchi making enough conversation for the two of them.

"Oi, Noya-san." Tanaka grabs for Nishinoya's attention, and earns it. "Since Daichi said there was no practice today do you wanna get pork-buns?"

Nishinoya smiles broadly. "Hell yeah!" He cheers, completely forgetting that he needs to go to the library after classes.

* * *

><p>After walking home part way with Yamaguchi, Tsukishima Kei didn't go straight home like usual. For a guy like him, who didn't interact with others (aside from making snide comments and Yamaguchi) it surprised even him when his feet carried him to Akiyama's house.<p>

Instinctively, he knocked and waited, almost about to leave until he heard someone call out that they were coming. When the door opened, Akiyama Kazuko, Naru's mother, stood on the other side. Her chocolate brown hair was pulled to the side in a loose braid and she was wearing a pink apron. Tsukishima looked down at her, raising his hand in a 'hello' gesture.

Kazuko smiled. "Ah, Tsukishima-kun, it's been so long. Are you here to see Naru?" She asks politely.

Actually, Tsukishima isn't a hundred percent sure _why_ he's here. Before he can come up with an excuse, Kazuko invites him in.

"Sorry for the intrusion." He says when he crosses the threshold.

Kazuko giggles. "You're just like I remember." She sighs. "Naru is upstairs, she's asleep but you can go see her."

Tsukishima nods, heading up the stairs and remembering exactly where Naru's room is. It's the second door on the right. He knocks, but doesn't wait for a response to enter the room. It didn't matter if he waited; Kazuko had said she was asleep anyways. There on the bed, as promised, laid Akiyama. She had torn her sheets off in her sleep and they twisted around through her legs, under her head, and into one hand that gripped the fabric tightly. The way she was laying, one would think she was in pain, but her face looked as peaceful as ever.

Tsukishima puts his bag down by the door and sits next to Akiyama on the floor. Akiyama groans and that makes Tsukishima jump, thinking she's going to wake up, but she doesn't. Akiyama doesn't know that Tsukishima's been to her house before. Any time he showed up she was either asleep or not home. Kazuko had promised to keep the trend a secret from her daughter until Akiyama figured it out herself. That was fine with Tsukishima and it wasn't like he cared anyway.

Reaching out, Tsukishima moved some hair away from Akiyama's face, gently brushing it behind her ear. He wasn't sure why girls kept their hair that long, he hated it when hair got in his face and that's why he kept it short.

Realizing that, not only what he just did, but also what he just did _again_, Tsukishima blushed and put his hands back into his lap. The girl looked so much more benign in her sleep that he actually felt like he could approach her the same way Nishinoya or Yamaguchi did and not like the cynical asshole he was on a regular basis.

No, it wasn't that he was cynical, actually. It might have been because he wasn't too sure how to interact socially aside from mockery. But he would never mock Yamaguchi; at least, he doesn't anymore. Yamaguchi had always followed him around, but if it was a real pain then he would have told Yamaguchi so a long time ago.

Deciding that he didn't want to be there when Akiyama woke up, Tsukishima gathered his things and said goodbye to Kazuko before making his way back home.

* * *

><p>Authors Notes:

**Obviously I need more of a life if all I do is write, I mean seriously, I'm in the middle of writing like 7 stories (including this one) and six of them are all completely original works. One of those works has like 50k words or so and I need to revise the whole thing, which will suck immensely. **

Anyways, more on topic here, I'm really glad for all the continued support of this story, and I'm super happy that everyone likes it enough to **_keep**_** reading. Thank you readers, what would I do without you. I hope you're all prepared to see some really awkward Tsukishima moments. Because he totally has a thing for Akiyama and is totally jealous of Nishinoya, not that he actually knows that or

anything.**

**Oh Tsukishima, my own judicious trash-prince, please take me to thy garbage dump palace as your trash-bride! Sweep me out from under the noses of thy and mine parents without abhorring our stupidity and let us elope in thy rusty-ass carriage and be wed to the sweetly sounds of cars being smashed together at full force until they are intpinse! **

**Seriously though, I would probably let him take me to a garbage dump as a date and I wouldn't even complain in the slightest. **

Also definitions:

Intpinse:Impossible to untangle.

Jusicious: Fair, equitable.

Abhor/ Abhorring: To reject or disdain.

**Those are some Shakespearean words for ya, even if Microsoft Word says that intpinse isn't a real word, screw that man. **

9. Chapter 9

Now, Yamaguchi knew that Tsukishima was just naturally, perpetually awkward with people, but even he could tell that this type of awkward wasn't really normal for his tall friend.

Firstly, Yamaguchi had simply asked Tsukishima if he had seen Akiyama around at first break. It had taken several reiterations of the question for Tsukishima to say no before they moved on. That was the first strike.

Next, when they had run into Akiyama in the hall at lunch and she tried to avoid a direct conversation with Tsukishima, and that went like this:

"AH!" Akiyama sputters, trying to regain her balance after almost knocking Tsukishima over in her rush to get wherever she was going. "S-sorryâ€¦| Tsukisiâ€¦"

"Ts-it-it's fine." He mumbled back.

When Tsukishima avoided Akiyama's gaze he looked down towards Yamaguchi, who stared in utter disbelief that Tsukishima didn't threaten her like usual.

"I-uhâ€¦| is it?" Akiyama mutters. "Well then I'd- I'll be gong-going now."

Tsukishima shoots his arm out to block her, not looking at either of the two people near him. "Don'tâ€¦" He starts but Akiyama yelps and ducks under his arm before running away.

"Tsukkiâ€¦|?" Yamaguchi asks gently. "Are you feeling okay?"

Tsukishima fixes himself and sets on forward to class. "I'm fine, Yamaguchi."

That was strike two.

Later at practice, Nishinoya was late because he had, once again, earned Akiyama's favour and got her to come watch practice. Nishinoya hadn't noticed, but Tsukishima was glaring so hard at the libero that Yamaguchi swore the volleyball the middle blocker was holding would pop like a balloon. After Akiyama distanced herself to stand with Shimizu, Tsukishima's face had simmered down to its usual passive nature. That was strike three, and on their walk home, Yamaguchi had had enough of his friends' weird behaviour.

"Tsukki." He says to get his friends attention.

Tsukishima grunts and turns to face him. "What is it?"

"You've been acting weird lately." Yamaguchi starts. "Is it because of Akiyama? Or are you really sick and then lied to me about it at lunch?" The second question is more stern, yet playful, trying not to get directly to it or else Tsukishima would just brush him off.

"I might be sick." Tsukishima deadpans. "It's probably just a minor fever." The teen sighs. "By the way, the other day you said something about it being Akiyama's birthday and that's why she was sick."

It's a question of what happened, and Yamaguchi knows that so he complies. "Yeah, why, did you want to know what's so special about her birthday?"

Tsukishima nods. "Sure, whatever."

"Well, you didn't know her yet, but it's part of the reason why she moved." Yamaguchi pauses for Tsukishima to interject, but he doesn't. "There was a robber at her house on her birthday. She wasn't home yet because she was out with friends, but when she turned onto her street cop cars passed her and when she was about to run she heard a gunshot. The robber killed her dad." He pauses again, but his friend remains silent, so he continues. "Don't tell her I know, or that I told you. Her mom told me. She was hiding in a closet while the robber was there, she was pregnant with Naru's little brother. Have you ever met her mom? She's really nice."

"I have" Tsukishima nods.

"Oh, rightâ€¦ I forgot that you met Akiyama last year. It was that practice match she had with our old school right? The only time the girls' team had enough members to play a game."

"Ah, yeah."

"I still can't believe you didn't tell me."

"I didn't know she was the same Akiyama you told me about until she told me not to tell you." Tsukishima explains.

"Did she really, purposely, peg the other girls in the face with her spike?" Yamaguchi asks.

Tsukishima tilts his head in what Yamaguchi deems a nod. "Not every spike, only the ones where the other girls called her a 'daddy's girl' to taunt her." He sighs. "Obviously I get why she did it now."

Yamaguchi hums. "Yeah, those girls seem pretty nasty, I'm glad none of them go to Karasuno."

"It's not like she'd quit volleyball over that." Tsukishima scoffs. "If that was the reason I would be even more disappointed." He mumbles.

"Huh?" Yamaguchi looks up at his friend, mystified. "Tsukkiâ€| was what you told the team _not_ the whole story?"

Tsukishima looks down at Yamaguchi and the shorter can read his mind when their eyes connect. Tsukishima had said something he hadn't meant to say. Something he probably wouldn't tell even Yamaguchi unless it was by accident.

"Oh, time to split up." Tsukishima says, looking ahead to the fork in the road with relief. "See you, Yamaguchi." He announces, quickly walking home.

* * *

><p>Akiyama wakes up to the sound of her mother calling her.<p>

"Naru!" Kazuko yells. "You're late for school! It's eleven!"

Akiyama shoots out of bed faster than the speed of light and scrambles to put on her uniform, grabbing some money and a banana before shouting _goodbye_ as she slammed the front door behind her.

When she arrived at school, lunch had just started. She was calmer now, but still screamed when she heard someone suddenly shout her name from behind. It was Nishinoya.

Nishinoya laughs whole-heartedly. "You're easily scared, aren't you Naru-san?" He smiles.

Akiyama clutches her rapid heart. "Nishita-Nishinoya-senpai, pul-_please_ don't sneak up on me like that!" She groans, putting a hand on her knee.

"Okay, okay I promise!" He says, patting the girl on the back. "I couldn't find you at break, but I wanna ask if you're coming to watch practice again."

Akiyama chuckles awkwardly, trying to subtly inch herself away from the second year. "Iâ€| I'm not sure if I would be soup- super welcomb-come."

Before Nishinoya opens his mouth, he blinks and she's gone. Akiyama runs down the hall, desperately trying to avoid her senpai. Unfortunately she doesn't look where she's going and accidentally smacks right into Tsukishima.

"AH!" Akiyama sputters, trying to regain her balance after almost knocking Tsukishima over in her rush to get away from Nishinoya.
"S-sorryâ€¦| Tsukisiâ€¦"

"Ts-it-it's fine." He mumbled back.

Akiyama is in shock by his words for a moment as Tsukishima avoids her gaze, favoring to look down at Yamaguchi, who stared in utter disbelief that Tsukishima didn't threaten her like usual.

"I-uhâ€¦| is it?" Akiyama mutters, unsure if he was messing with her or not. "Well then I'd- I'll be gong-going now."

Tsukishima shoots his arm out to block her._ Nope he was totally messing with me._ The girl thinks to herself. Tsukishima doesn't look at either of the two this time. "Don'tâ€¦" He starts but Akiyama yelps in terror and ducks under his arm before running away to safety.

Later that day, she received a message from her mother saying that Oikawa would be coming over to visit. Just as she finished reading, Nishinoya, her very own guardian-angel-in-black, came into her line of vision.

"Nishinoya-senpai!" She calls out, running over and almost tripping in the process. "I think, today I will come to watch practice." She pants, regaining her balance.

Nishinoya's face lights up like the sun on a clear day. "Yes! Tanaka owes me pork buns!" He cheers, pumping his fist.

The two are late for practice, but Nishinoya is still glowing over the fact that he gets free pork buns. Tanaka, upon hearing the news, started to count on his fingers to determine how much money he had. To Akiyama, it looked like he had very little, because he stood there holding up two fingers and looking depressed for at least five minutes while Nishinoya laughed happily.

The rest of practice was rather benign after she went to stand with Shimizu, who smiled at her, happy to have another girl nearby. When she got home, there was no sign of her cousin aside from his volleyball, which he had left there by accident.

* * *

><p>Authors Note:

Okay I'm like, super sorry for this late, late, late update. School started a while ago, so I've been busy with that, and while I get little homework, I also have a job so any free time I've got is very small and I use it to relax. Not that writing isn't relaxing, because it is, but watching anime and movies is far easier to accomplish with what brain capacity I've got left after the day is done.

Also, I wasn't sure what to write for the next chapter so I hope you all like this one? Please like it, that would make my day. I think now that I've set some stuff up it'll be a little easier to come up with new chapters and whatnot.

**My friend who I showed this to asked me why I decided to give

Akiyama that quirk of saying the wrong word and correcting herself, also stuttering. So, if you wanna know, the reason is that I made a spelling error in her dialogue and was too lazy to change it so I went "Fuck it that's gon be her thing." So now whenever I make a spelling mistake in her dialogue I just keep it there. That seems really lazy, and it totally is, believe me. **

But Yeah, I hope you like more awkward Tsukishima dealing with realizing his first crush for the first time, also some interesting plot lines to come.

**~ Chris **

10. Chapter 10

It was something like an insignificant Thursday when Nishida came home very late from school. As far as Akiyama was concerned, he was always home late, preferring to stay out and play with friends until just before dinnertime. Today however, the story changed when he tried to sneak in at seven with a black eye.

"Nishidi-da?!" Akiyama cries when she sees him. "What ha-h-happened to your eye?" She frets, fluttering her hands around her little brother.

The boy smiles a little before looking up at his sister. "I got hit when we were playing baseball, I missed the catch." Nishida chuckles. "Sorry I'm late, we went to my friends' house to put cream on my eye since he lives closest."

Akiyama sighs in relief. "You're lucky mom had to stay late tonight, otherwise she would have taken you to the hospital."

Nishida nods and dismisses himself to his room.

* * *

><p>The Thursday following, Oikawa visits unannounced to pick up his volleyball, opting to stay for tea that wasn't offered to him.<p>

"Naru-can~" He sings. "Can you tell me something?"

"What?" She snaps quickly.

"I didn't ask Nishida, but what happened to his eye?"

"Oh, that." She says dumbly. "He got hit with a baseball last week when he and his friends were playing."

Oikawa gives Akiyama a confused expression. "Nishida hates baseballâ€|" He mutters.

Akiyama turns around to glare at him. "If you're gonna say something out loud, say it so it can be heard, Asskawa." She spits, smacking a teaspoon down on the table for him.

Oikawa laughs. "Naru-can, you're so sweet." He smiles. "You're words are mean but you're actions are nice."

The tall girl turns back to the sink to continue washing dishes. "Shut up or I'll take that ball and serve it into the next town over."

"So cruel Naru-chan!" Oikawa whines.

"Not cruel, deserved." She states.

"You say you hate me, yet here you are, serving me tea like I'm an honoured guest." Oikawa chuckles. "Ironic."

Akiyama shrugs. "You're still my cousin. Family is important to me, so even if you do piss me off I'll still treat you like family, cuss words included." She spits out. "Now finish your tea and get out of my house."

* * *

><p>On Monday, Nishinoya once again convinces Akiyama to come and watch practice. The girl can't seem to find it in her to really watch though, not even Hinata and Kageyama's bickering, which always amused her. She's more concerned about Nishida and the new bruises he has every other time he comes home and what others might exist in places she can't see.<p>

She can tell Yamaguchi, Nishinoya, and Tsukishima have all noticed her dejected behavior, she saw them looking her way multiple times during practice. Yamaguchi and Nishinoya looked concerned, but Tsukishima just looked like he was in pain by looking at her. Akiyama hoped she hadn't angered him, so the next time he looked her way, she sent him a smile. It didn't work though; he just frowned a little and coughed into his elbow before running off. Daichi had witnessed it and looked at Akiyama as if to say "_Don't worry about him."_ But she does.

Unfortunately, Tsukishima was acting stranger than she thought she had been acting for the past week or so. He would constantly try to avoid Akiyama in the halls, and even when they did bump into each other he could barely string one word together, let alone full insults. She'd asked Yamaguchi about it, since the two boys were close, but he said that Tsukishima hadn't said anything.

"So nothing then?" She asks.

Yamaguchi hums. "Not that I can recall, he's being relatively normal in practice and during lessons, even if he hardly listens."

The tall girl sighs. "Thanks anyways. Do you think anyone else would know about it?"

"Ask your mom, maybe. Doesn't she know Tsukishima?"

Akiyama shakes her head. "I don't think that they've ever metâ€| but I could try. Thanks anyways, Tadashi." She says before running off.

* * *

><p>Later that evening six becomes seven which becomes eight and

Nishida still hasn't come home yet. No one has called the house since Kazuko did to say that she was working late at the bakery, and Akiyama is actually contemplating on whether or not to call Oikawa and ask him if he knew where her little brother was.<p>

And she does.

"Naru-chan?" Oikawa's voice comes clear through the receiver.

"Tooruâ€|"

"Yes?" He sounds amused.

"Do youâ€| do you know where Nishida is? Is he with you?" Akiyama asks quietly.

For a few moments that felt like hours, Oikawa is silent. "No." He says. "Stay there and call more people, I'll be over soon." He rushes, hanging up quickly.

Akiyama sits stunned for a moment before pulling the phone from her ear.

****Akiyama Kazuko****

****Oikawa Tooru****

****Yamaguchi Tadashi****

****Tsukishima Kei****

****Nishinoya Yuu****

These are the only numbers on her phone. She decides that she'll call them all, starting with Yamaguchi.

"Hiâ€| Naru? What is it?" He asks.

Akiyama takes in a deep breath. "Tadashi, Nishida's not home yet, can you please come over and help me look for him, he's been coming home with bruises since Tuesâ€" no Thursday an-a-and I'm worried that something's hap-ap-appened to him." She says faster than the speed of light.

For a minute she thinks that he couldn't understand her hysterics, but then he speaks. "Don't bother calling anyone else; I'll call them right now, okay?"

"Okay." She whispers.

* * *

><p>Oikawa is the first to arrive, practically panting at her door step when she spots the Karasuno volleyball team behind him. Yamaguchi is standing closest, with Nishinoya, Tanaka, and Tsukishima behind him, and the rest of the team behind them. That's when Akiyama cries, and when Yamaguchi steps forward to console her, she grabs him roughly and hugs him as tightly as her arms will permit while she falls to her knees.<p>

"T-th-t-tha-thank you." She sobs into Yamaguchi's shoulder.
"Th-t-thank you, Tad-Tadashi."

"Did you call Kazuko?" He asks.

Akiyama nods into Yamaguchi's shoulder and bites down on her lip.
"Sh-sh-s-she's out loo-looking for hi-i-him too."

Yamaguchi pats his friend on the back and pulls her back to see her eyes. "Let's go find Nishida."

* * *

><p>Authors Note:

****EXTRA SORRY WITH A SIDE OF FRIES GUYS.****

****I didn't mean to **_**not**_** update for this long. I mean, I really wasn't planning on that. Apparently grade 12 is actually harder than I led you all (myself included) to believe it was. I have stuff to read all the time, and memorize, and practice? Like I've even got to perform a solo song tomorrow in vocal, then reading to dissect in Social Justice, then I have another childrens theater assignment in drama, and we're starting latex work in my makeup class.****

****BUT that's all useless excuses because I can't make time for shit all these days. October is always super busy because I work at a haunted house ASWELL as my regular job **_**and**_** school + friends. BUT I MAKE TIME!****

****Or I try toâ€|****

****Anyways, I'll try to update more frequently from now on, like, at least every other week? Or more hopefully.****

****Anywho, thank you for reading/enjoying/commenting on/following/favouriting this story!****

_ Chris**_**

11. Chapter 11

"Nishida!" Oikawa shouts into the cold air of the night.

His voice is followed by countless others, all male except for Akiyama's. The group had been searching for Akiyama's brother, Nishida, for hours.

Oikawa curses under his breath, "I'm gonna go check my house, Naru, go with someone to check yours."

"I'll go," Tsukishima offers, holding a hand up while beating Nishinoya _and _Yamaguchi to the punch.

Akiyama swallows hard, "Tooru, it's really o-"

Oikawa holds up his hand, "don't argue, just go with him."

The girl nods and Tsukishima joins her side. She looks down at him and breathes in sharply before turning back to the direction of her house, Tsukishima simply following behind her. Just barely over her thoughts, Akiyama can hear Daichi directing everyone to continue their search before she's too far away to hear anything but her's and Kei's footsteps.

They hadn't walked long before the pair reached their destination. Akiyama pushes her key into the slot and swings the door open. None of the lights in the house were on and, after checking every room, it was empty. Akiyama took out her phone and called her cousin.

"Naru, is he there?" Oikawa's voice shakes from the other end.

Akiyama sighs, "no, and I'd bet he's not with you either..."

"No, he's not." He pauses, "just... stay there, he might come back, I'll stay home too and we'll keep in touch with everyone else. I'll call you when I know more." With that, the line cuts off.

Akiyama's eyes filled themselves with water she couldn't hold back. She closes her eyes and tries hopelessly to pretend that Nishida is okay, that he's only asleep in his room, but the silence of the house does nothing to soothe her. Behind her, watching her shoulders shake, stood Tsukishima. He reached out a hand tentatively, only to pull away. He wasn't sure why. Maybe because he was sure he was the last person who she wanted to comfort her. Almost instantly, he regrets not letting Yamaguchi or Nishinoya go with her out of pride.

The tall girl turns to face Kei, eyes swollen and blood shot, "I'm sorry..." is the first thing that comes out of her mouth, "I'm sorry, thank you for helping fi-f-find Nishida," she hiccups.

"It-"

Akiyama cuts him off, "do you want tea?" she sniffles.

"I'll do it," he says, "you can sit down."

"But you don't know where the kettle and tea is..."

Tsukishima pauses, "I do. I've been to your house before, Kazuko made me tea a few times."

"You've..."

"Yeah, so just... sit down," the boy sighs.

Akiyama nods and does as she's told. She watches as Tsukishima takes out her mothers bright pink kitty kettle and fills it before setting it on the stove. After that he dug through the cupboards and pulled out some mugs and put pouches of green tea in each. It seemed so domestic, almost familiar. Despite how much she thought Kei hated her for changing how she did, she couldn't help find joy in the moment of it. When Tsukishima joins the girl on the couch, Akiyama is the first to speak.

"You didn't have to come with me, I know you just wanted to get out of the cold."

Tsukishima swallows, "that's not... what I meant by it."

"And what's this about being here before? Why even bother?" Akiyama pauses, "or did you just feel obligated to check up on the girl whose life you saved?" the girl sighs and leans forward, "sorry, I don't mean it that way..."

"I know that you're trying really hard to be a better person... Naru," Tsukishima says her name like he's testing it out for the first time.

"You don't like that do you?"

Tsukishima looks away, "well, I don't know what was wrong with the way you were... You're not trying to be a better person, you're trying to be a different person."

Akiyama pulls her knee's to her chest, "It's better that way... no one needs the 'Court's Devil' anyways. All I did was scare people." she pauses for Kei, but he says nothing, "I'd bet you were scared of me too, if you aren't still."

"I'm not, I never was... You were the one who said they didn't want to play volleyball, so I tried to help you, but I still think you should play."

Akiyama hums, tracing circles onto her couch. "I'll... I can try..."

"And about Yamaguchi-"

"I'll tell him what happened, I'm sure he'll-" Akiyama's soft voice is cut off by the sharp ring of her phone, it was Oikawa.

"Tooru!" she nearly screeched, "what-"

"Aunty Kazuko found Nishida, he was at his school."

"Is he okay?" Akiyama asks, standing up off the couch.

"He's fine, he's got a fever, but he'll be fine... He was being bullied by the little siblings of those girls... you know the ones. So we're gonna transfer him." Oikawa explains.

Akiyama lets out the breath she didn't know she was holding, "tell him I'm sorry if you get the chance."

"Okay, I'll see you tomorrow cuz!"

Akiyama turns to Tsukishima and explains to him what Oikawa has told her and he nods before standing.

"I'll go get the others."

Akiyama reaches out and grabs the back of his shirt as he's walking away, "wait, Kei."

"What is it?"

"I-it's late, bu-but, thank you for saving my life, and for helping Tooru, mom, and I find Nishida." The girl blushes, looking down at her feet.

Tsukishima's eyes dilate before he reaches out for her, pulling her into him without thinking. "Don't worry about it..." he manages to force out before letting her go.

"Kei..." Akiyama mumbles but Tsukishima keeps walking.

"See you tomorrow, Naru."

* * *

><p> Well, it's been a few months, and honestly I have no excuse other than anything I've used before, also writers block sucks wildly. I kept trying to figure out a good way to continue and end the Nishida story arc, but I simply couldn't until now. I can't promise quicker updates (as I generally break those promises), but I'll try, especially since I graduated and that it's summer now. Oh yeah and I didn't proofread this, so, sorry! In favor of getting it up faster I chose not to really, y'now, edit it much.

** I really hope you like this, even if you don't think it was worth the wait.**

** All my love and thanks,**

~ Chris

12. Chapter 12

That night, Akiyama stood in front of the mirror in her bedroom, donned in only her underwear, scrutinized herself. Thin, boney body, pasty skin, so flat she could just barely make a B cup a possibility, hips that would probably break just by thinking about childbirth, long, poorly dyed auburn hair, thick, unkempt eyebrows. The last thing her eyes were carried to was her torso. The skin around her ribcage and stomach twisted and knotted by all the thick scars.

"_Forget about that future of yours..."_

Her fingers traced one of the scars by her belly button and she shivered from the cold.

"_What a freak..."_

She used her hands to cover her dozens of scars and pretended for a moment that her skin was smooth like marble, strong enough to never be cut.

"_Maybe you should stop playing volleyball..."_

Hands gripped the skin under them, clutching onto whatever they could as her nails stuck into her, a numb pain.

"_I doubt you'll ever have someone._"

She felt a stab in her side and looked over at the scar that sat in it's place. She closed her eyes.

"_Who're you?"_

Silence. It had been so long since that day, that day when Tsukishima had saved her life. After her first game ever, the girls on the other team got some people together and had attacked her. Some of them had knives. She was sure that, if she wasn't found, she would have died there, bruised black and skin stained red in the pools of blood underneath her.

And it was the last thing she remembered. The cold ground under her ripped up jersey, the smell of rust in the air and taste of metal in her mouth, the sound of feet quickly shuffling away. Then all of her senses went black. When Akiyama had woken up, the first thing she heard was a soft, rhythmic beeping. She was alive. To the right of her hospital bed was a boy with short blonde hair and glasses. He had headphones over his ears as he looked on to the outside of her white room.

She tried to call to him, and only a strangled noise came out, but still he looked back at her.

"Good, you're up," he said.

Akiyama adjusted herself, "Wh..." Her voice croaked.

The boy sighed and pointed at himself, "Tsukishima Kei." He paused, "You shouldn't talk... Do you know what happened?"

Akiyama looked down at herself and gritted her teeth, balling her hands into fists, seething. Despite her looks, her height, she couldn't do anything to stop what had happened to her. So, in her eyes, maybe that was her own fault. Every cruel remark and twisted look she had ever given only led her here; in the hospital, IV in her arm, bandages around her body, and saved by a boy she didn't even know.

Akiyama nodded slowly.

"Then get some rest." Tsukishima said to her, eyes locked on her IV.

With those words, he left. The next day he would visit again, and he would visit at least twice a week until she was out.

That spring, when her first year in senior high began, she decided she would become the person she had been before her father died.

Akiyama opened her eyes and look at herself again. Slender body, dazzling white skin, chest just the right size for her, hips that could fit into sizes that a model would envy, long, beautiful auburn hair. The last thing her eyes were carried to was her torso. The skin around her ribcage and stomach just as beautiful as it should be for a survivor. She was not the person who still had two loving parents anymore, she was also not the _Court's Devil_, and she would never be

again. She was Akiyama Naru, and she finally realized just how strong she truly was.

* * *

><p>The next day, Akiyama came to class with her head high. She had started using contacts, she answered questions without pause, and now, at break, she was sitting on the roof with Tsukishima Kei and Yamaguchi Tadashi.<p>

"How's Nishida doing?" Yamaguchi asked, taking a sip of his juice.

Akiyama look up from her sandwich, "much better."

The freckled boy nodded, "so, why did you want to eat up here with us?"

This comment had also gained the attention of Tsukishima, who had been doing his best to ignore the two.

"I want to play volleyball with you again."

The statement startled Yamaguchi, who ended up swallowing his juice the wrong way, practically wheezing from the sudden, improper, intake of vitamin C.

Akiyama continued, "I want to move past what happened but, Kei," she paused, waiting for him to look at her, "this whole time you've been supporting me, even if others think that you were just cruel. You didn't like who I was trying to be, but you still supported my choices. So, I owe you a lot more now." Tsukishima raised his brow, "Kei, don't let me forget what happened."

"Uh..." Yamaguchi voiced, "what did happen?"

Akiyama smiled and looked down on her friend, finally explaining to him why she had quit a sport she loved so much, why Tsukishima had done so much for her. After her explanation, she lifted her shirt up to show him the scars all over her body, but he couldn't say anything. Yamaguchi sat there, tears brimming in his vision as he looked at Tsukishima and back to his childhood friend.

The girl pulled her shirt back into place and took Yamaguchi's hand into her own, "You don't need to worry about me anymore."

"Gross," Tsukishima voiced.

Akiyama whacked her hand over the blondes head, "You ruined the moment, Kei!"

* * *

><p>Authors note:

**So I think that I'm getting over the block with this story? There might be like... two more chapters after this, maybe one? Either way I really hope you enjoy it. I would have gotten it done earlier today, but on my way home (from a place like, 2 hours away from me) I got lost and somehow ended up at some random public school which

caused me to take 4 hours to get home. I was really freaking out though. I accidentally took the highway east instead of west which is like? the main reason I got lost but the 3rd time I got lost on my way home...**

not that you really care but like? I don't know.

Comments, criticism, and compliments and story ideas are always awesome for you to leave for me, I read them all at least twice each.

~ Chris

End
file.